

be able to become a free and united nation. And as a free and united nation, Cyprus will grant stability to a violate area of the world where the United States has crucial interests.

Mr. Speaker, during my years in congress, I have worked diligently on behalf of the Greek and Cypriot community to help locate family members lost during the Turkish invasion and advocated for the removal of the barbed wire which prevents the restoration of a independent and united Cyprus.

This Congress has let the issue of Cyprus remain quiet for too long. I ask my colleagues to show their strong support for a united Cyprus.

#### TURKEY INVASION OF CYPRUS

##### HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 27, 2001*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 27th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus.

As Greek-Cypriots in America and around the world gathered last week to mark a tragic day in their nation's history, it is proper and fitting that we in this body join them in the hope that peace will soon return to their island nation.

As we gather on the floor of the House to mark the 27th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus, 37 percent of that country remains occupied by Turkish military forces. It is equally unfortunate that five American citizens of Cypriot descent and over 1,600 Greek-Cypriots are still unaccounted for as a result of Turkey's 1974 invasion of Cyprus.

We, in this Congress, have passed resolution after resolution urging Turkey to withdraw its forces from Cyprus. We have passed measures and written letters urging Turkish-Cypriot leaders to renounce "declarations of independence" that they have issued in defiance of international law. And in the United Nations, the United States has consistently and forcefully urged Turkey to end its military occupation of over a third of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

Yet despite these efforts, today, we remain far from a final settlement that will end the artificial division of Cyprus.

It is my belief that Congress has a solemn obligation to speak out and support a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. A solution which must follow the precepts laid down in United Nations Security Council 1250, which was adopted on June 29, 1999 and which in part reads, "... a Cyprus settlement must be based on a State of Cyprus with a single sovereignty." In short, the U.S. House of Representatives should serve as a guiding force in the pursuit of a reunified Cyprus, an island nation where all citizens enjoy fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that I am of the belief that the solution to the Cyprus problem resides in the will of the United States and the international community to renounce the violence that divided Cyprus over a quarter century ago and to affirm that the reunification of Cyprus is a priority.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by thanking the Co-Chairs of the Hellenic Caucus, Representatives MICHAEL BILIRAKIS and CAROLYN

MALONEY for their exceptional work. I look forward to working with them in the 107th Congress to ensure that some day soon, the unification, not the division of Cyprus, will be commemorated in this body.

#### TURKEY INVASION OF CYPRUS

##### HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 27, 2001*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, as I have done every year, I rise again today to reiterate my fierce objection to the illegitimate occupation of the island of Cyprus by Turkish troops and declare my grave concern for the future of the area. The island's twenty-seven years of internal division make the status quo absolutely unacceptable.

In July 1974, Turkish troops captured the northern part of Cyprus, seizing over a third of the island. The Turkish troops expelled 200,000 Greek-Cypriots from their homes and killed 5,000 citizens of the once-peaceful island. The Turkish invasion was a conscious and deliberate attempt at ethnic cleansing. Turkey proceeded to install 35,000 military personnel. Today, these troops, in conjunction with United Nations peacekeeping forces, make the small island of Cyprus one of the most militarized areas in the world. Over a quarter of a century later, about 1,500 Greek-Cypriots remain missing, including four Americans.

The Green Line, a 113-mile barbed wire fence, separates the Greek-Cypriot community from its Turkish-Cypriot counterpart. The Turkish Northern Republic of Cyprus (TNRC), recognized by no nation in the world except for Turkey, prohibits Greek-Cypriots from crossing the Green Line to visit the towns and communities of their families. With control of about thirty-seven percent of the island, Turkey's military occupation has had severe consequences, most notably the dislocation of the Greek Cypriot population and the resulting refugees.

Twenty-seven years later, forced separation of these two communities still exists despite efforts by the UN and G-8 leadership to mend this rift between north and south. So far, the UN, with the explicit support of the United States, has sponsored six rounds of proximity talks between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and Mr. Rauf Denktash, the self-proclaimed leader of the TNRC.

Regrettably, the implementation of any agreements has been thwarted by the intransigent position taken by Mr. Denktash, with the full backing of the Turkish Government. His refusal to participate in the UN sponsored talks until demands for the recognition of Northern Cyprus as a separate state are met is unacceptable. Mr. Denktash has made it clear that his position on the issue is non-negotiable, leaving very little room for progress. In his recent testimony before the Senate Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittee, Secretary of State Colin Powell specifically singled out Mr. Denktash as the main obstacle in developing a comprehensive solution to the problem.

Impressively, even with this division constantly taking center-stage, the Republic of

Cyprus has flourished and grown as an economy and society. Growth has been averaging 6% per year and its per capita income ranks near the top of all developed countries. Its unemployment rate of 3.6% is lower than that of the United States. It is a Europe-oriented nation that is of strategic, economic, and political importance to the region and to the rest of the world.

This success has brought Cyprus to a critical turning point in its history. For the first time, the people of Cyprus have the opportunity to seal their future by becoming part of the European Union which is about to accept a large number of new members. Upon accession to the European Union, Cyprus will, in its capacity as a full member, be firmly anchored to the western political and security structures, enhancing both geographically and qualitatively the operational capabilities of the Western world.

The Republic of Cyprus and the United States share a common tradition of respect for human rights, a faith in the power of democratic institutions, and a commitment to free market economics. Our two governments have similarly had close ties. Consequently, it is in the interest of the United States to see a strong and vibrant Cyprus which will enhance the future strength of our alliance. To that end, the most meaningful way to ensure that outcome is to promote Cyprus's membership in the European Union.

Union membership for Cyprus also has the potential to resolve some of the ongoing disputes in the Mediterranean region. At the European Council meeting in Helsinki in December 1999, Turkey was granted the status of a candidate country for accession to the EU. In accordance with the Accession Partnership Document of Turkey, which was endorsed by the European Council meeting in Nice in December 2000, Turkey must strongly support the UN Secretary General's efforts to bring about a successful conclusion to the process of finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The European Council decision taken in Helsinki in December 1999 also states that the Council's decision on accession for Cyprus will not be preconditioned on a settlement to the Cyprus problem. On the other hand, it is understood that accession negotiations with Turkey cannot begin until Turkey complies with the stipulations and conditions laid down by the European Council decisions in Helsinki, Copenhagen and Nice.

The United States government has strongly supported the Helsinki Conclusions both on the issue of Cyprus' accession and Turkey's candidacy for membership and should continue to do so. Additionally, serious efforts have been undertaken by the UN Secretary General to resume negotiations between the two communities in Cyprus. These efforts have always enjoyed the full support of the United States.

It is obvious that resolution of the perennial dispute between Greece and Turkey on Cyprus remains the key to a successful and lasting settlement of the problem. Although the Helsinki decision does not consider a Greco-Turkish agreement on Cyprus a precondition for the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union, such an agreement would remove any obstacles to the accession of Turkey to the European Union, benefitting all parties concerned in the current dispute.